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IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend line 1 of paragraph 16, on page 4, as follows:

With reference now to Figures 3, the stick 107 is shown also incorporating the teachings of the present invention. The stick 107 also comprises a pair of spaced apart side plates 300 each attached, also preferably by a robotic welding process, to a top plate 301 and a bottom plate 302. The stick 107 includes the first end 111 sized to fit between the ears 213 of the second end 210 of the boom 106. The first end 111 further includes an aperture 306 for receipt of pin 111 thereby providing for the aforementioned pivotal attachment to the boom 106. The second end 115 of the stick 107 also includes an aperture 307 sized to receive pin 118. Coupling assembly 309 extend from the bottom plate 302 and is used to pivotably support the second hydraulic actuator 114 in a well known manner.

Please amend paragraph 20, page 6, as follows:

As shown, each reinforcing structure 221 comprises a substantially straight member having a base portion 404 and a rib portion 405 extending from the base portion 404. The reinforcing structure 221 may comprise a metallic or other rigid material and has a length which is user-selected based on the failure analysis performed on at least one of the members 105 and to be discussed with reference to Fig. 6. Furthermore, it is also contemplated that other geometry's for the reinforcing structure 221 may also be used with deviating from the spirit of the present invention such as, for example, a cylindrical (as shown in alternative detail denoted as 406) or flat configuration.